1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
S14 Abipon S14

They climb high trees, And sit quietly
on their boughs, in order to plunder the hives 147
concealed there, without any sense of danger [222
or giddiness. After their removal to our colo- 48
nies, being fatigued with handling the axe and 75]
the plough, instruments to which they were [753]
unaccustomed, and feeling their strength fail
them, their bodies bathed in sweat, and burn-
ing with heat, they exclaimed, *La yivichigui*
yauigra, now my blood is angry. For this they 757
have a ready remedy: they plunge a knife deep
into their leg, watch the blood spouting from
it for some time with pleased eyes, and at
length stop it by applying a clod to the wound,
saying with a cheerful voice that they are re-
covered, and feel perfectly well. They are 147
as lavish, and almost prodigal in shedding 304
their blood, for the purpose of obtaining glory,
as of procuring health; for in public drink-
ing parties they cruelly prick their breast,
arms and tongue with a bundle of thorns, or
with the sharp bones of a crocodile's back, with
much effusion of blood. They emulate one [703]
another in doing this, in order to obtain a re-
putation for bravery, and that these sponta-
neous wounds may render them less fearful of
shedding their blood in engagements with the
enemy, and may make their skin impenetrable
by covering it with scars. Boys of seven years [866]
old pierce their little arms in imitation of their

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
514 Abipon 514

refuse to follow him, for what Cæsar said of the German chiefs is applicable to the Abiponian cacique: *Authoritate suadendi magis, quam jubendi potestate audiatur.* As soon as a report is spread of the danger of an hostile attack, the business of the cacique is to provide for the security of his people; to increase the store of weapons; to order the horses to be fetched from the distant pastures to safer places; to send out watchers by night, and scouts in every direction, to procure supplies from the neighbours, and to gain their alliance. When the enemy is to be attacked, he rides before his men, and occupies the front of the army he has raised, less solicitous about the numbers of the enemy, than the firmness of his troops: for as with birds, when one is shot, the rest fly away, in like manner the Abipones, alarmed at the deaths or wounds of a few of their fellow-soldiers, desert their leader, and escape on swift horses, wherever room for flight is afforded them, more anxious about their own safety than about obtaining a victory. Yet it must be acknowledged that this nation never wants its heroes. Many remain intrepid whilst their companions fall around them, and though pierced with wounds and streaming with blood, retain even in death the station where they fought. Desire of glory, ferocious study of revenge, or

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
SI4 Abipon SI4

despair of escape, inspires the naturally fearful with courage, which a Lacedemonian would admire, and which Europe desires to see in her warriors.

Moreover, being lovers of liberty and roving, they choose to own no law, and bind themselves to their cacique by no oaths of fidelity. Without leave asked on their part, or displeasure evinced on his, they remove with their families whithersoever it suits them, and join some other cacique; and when tired of the second, return with impunity to the horde of the first. This is quite common, and a matter of surprize to no one that knows how fleeting is the faith, how mutable the will of the Indians. Should a report be spread by uncertain or suspicious authors, that the enemy are coming in a few days, it is enough. Numbers, dreading the loss of life more than of fame, will desert their cacique, and hasten with their families to some well-known retreats. Lest however they should be branded with the name of deserters and cowards, they say they are going out to hunt. Hence, whenever we priests had to defend the new colonies filled with savage assailants, and almost destitute of inhabitants to repel them, we generally made more use of craft and threats than of force. The danger, or the fear of it, being dissipated, these fugacious heroes at length came home, no

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
514 Abipon 514

291 respectable appearance. When they are hew-
[313] ing down a tree, and are afraid of being fatigued,
they will sometimes throw off their clothes, if
they be out of sight. Some strip themselves
[726 quite naked when they are going to join battle
•703] with the savages, partly that, being lighter, they
may be so much the more expeditious in avoid-
ing their adversaries' weapons, partly, that they
may appear to despise wounds. In long jour-
[484] nies, they generally go bareheaded amidst rain,
heat, and wind. Some, however, tie a piece of
red woollen cloth round their forehead, which
is a great defence against the heat of the sun
[177] and pains in the head. They greatly prize a
European hat, especially the young men, who
likewise are much delighted with Spanish
saddles, with spurs, and iron bridles. The wo-
men wear the same dress as the men, adjusted
in rather a different manner.

462 The clothing of the Abipones is the chief em-
286 ployment of the women, who are commendable
for their assiduity, and almost avidity in labour:
for not to mention the daily business of the
[386] house, they shear sheep, spin the wool very
neatly, dye it beautifully, by the aid of alum,
with any colours they may have at hand, and
afterwards weave it into cloth, adorned with a
great number of lines and figures, and with a
variety of colours. You would take it for a

1:Dobrizhoffer M-S (ca. 1760) 1822
SI4 Abipon SI4

CHAPTER XXXIII.

OF THE MILITARY DISPOSITIONS OF THE ABIPONES.

I AM at a loss in what colours to paint the military dispositions of the Abipones; no word corresponds to the idea which long acquaintance with these savages has impressed on my mind. That the Abipones are warlike, prompt, and active, none even of the Spaniards ever doubted, but I should hesitate to call them valiant and intrepid. Cicero himself distinguishes an active from a brave man, in these words, 2. Philipp. *Ut cognosceret te, si minus fortem, attamen strenuum.* It is my purpose to write the history not the panegyric of the Abipones: I must therefore be sincere, and declare my real opinion, whatever it be.

Military fame is the principal object of the ambition of the Abipones. Their whole souls are bent upon arms. They can manage a spear, bow, and every kind of weapon with great dexterity, and ride on horseback with peculiar swiftness. No people with greater fortitude endures the hardships of war, the inclemencies of the sky, want of food, and the fatigues of travelling. They fearlessly swim across rivers formidable to

1:Dobrizhoffer M-S (ca. 1760) 1822
514 Abipon 514

181 sailors and ships. They look upon their wounds
703 without a groan, and with as much indifference
[147] as they would upon those of another person. They are acquainted with all those arts which every European soldier admires, but which so very few practise. This alone is unknown to
181 the Abipones, to despise death, and gain glory
703 by encountering danger. They boast of martial
761 souls, but are too unwilling to resign their lives. They are active, but can by no means be called brave, for a brave man would remain unterrified were the globe itself to fall in ruins, and would choose either to conquer or die. The Abipones always desire to conquer, but are never willing to die. They will curse a victory obtained at
[738] the expense of one of their countrymen's lives. They abhor triumphal hymns if mingled with funeral lamentations, and would reject a victory accompanied by the sighs of one mourning widow or orphan.

721 Certainly no one can accuse the Abipones of
181 rashness in venturing their lives. Their chief adorations are paid to the goddess Security, the arbitress of their battles, without whose approving sanction they will never risk an engagement. They carefully avoid a contest of uncertain issue. They always threaten others, always fear for themselves, and trust nothing to chance. Before they undertake a warlike

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
514 Abipon 514

726 breast as a mark to the flying balls. They boast that their quickness in assaulting and evading the blow, is the most useful part of the art of war. Whoever is aware of the volubility
703 of the savages, will never fire till quite sure of
726 hitting them; for after hearing a harmless report, without seeing any of their comrades fall, they will cast away their dread of European arms, and grow more daring than ever; but as long as they see you threatening them with a gun, they will continue to fear, more anxious to save themselves than to kill others.

The examples of our own age show that rashness in firing has been the destruction of many, —circumspect and provident delay the salvation of no fewer. It may be as well to give a few instances of this. In the territory of St. Iago del Estero, about dawn a troop of Abiponian horse descended from a steep and precipitous rock, and attacked a town of the Spaniards, called Las Barrancas; nor was it any difficult matter for them to slay the sleeping inhabitants. The Captain, Hilario, awakened by the yelling of the savages, and the groans of the dying, occupied the threshold of his house, keeping a gun always pointed at the enemies. Not one of them dared approach him. By this threatening action alone, he preserved himself and his little daughter alive amidst the deaths of so many of his neighbours.

1:Dobrizhoffer M-S (ca. 1760) 1822
514 Abipon 514

Another Spaniard, in the territory of Corrientes, seeing the court-yard of his house, which was but slightly fortified with stakes, surrounded by Abipones, turned his gun, perhaps not loaded, towards them, threatening first one, then another, by turns. This was more than sufficient to frustrate the intended assault of the Abipones. I knew a captain named Gorosito, who did much service amongst the soldiers of St. Iago. He made use of a gun from which you could not expect a single spark of fire, and on being asked why he did not have it repaired, replied that he thought that unnecessary. "It is sufficient," said he, "to show even a useless gun to the savages, who, not knowing it to be defective, are terrified at the very sight of it. Furnished with this gun, I have gained not only security, but glory, in many skirmishes." But I have no occasion for the testimonies and experience of others, having myself so often frightened away troops of assaulting savages, armed with a gun which I never once fired.

On the other hand, how dangerous a thing it is to fire guns inconsiderately, we have often found on various occasions, but above all in a new Indian colony, where a few garrison soldiers guarded the borders of Tucuman, on account of the frequent incursions of the savages.

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
814 Abipon 814

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This little town, the rebellious Mataguayos attacked about evening with all sorts of weapons. The soldiers, seized with a sudden trepidation, discharged all the fire-arms they could lay hands on at the savage band, but to their own injury, not that of the enemy, who, leaving their adversaries no time to load afresh, set fire to the houses with arrows headed with burning tow, and pierced the soldiers, who fled from thence into the court-yard, with barbed darts. Two Jesuit priests, who officiated there, Fathers Francisco Ugalde and Romano Harto, whilst attending to the salvation of the dying soldiers, underwent the fury of the savages within the palisadoes of the house. The first was mortally wounded with arrows, and buried in the ruins of the burning chapel, where he was entirely reduced to ashes, one little bone alone remaining, to which funeral honours were afterwards paid elsewhere. That his soul was received into Heaven is the opinion of all who are acquainted with his exceeding piety and mild integrity of conduct. Father Romano Harto, his companion, though wounded with two arrows which pierced deep into his side, crept under cover of night from the palings of his house into a neighbouring wood, and escaped the eyes and murderous hands of the savages. Wel-

1;Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
514 Abipon 514

tering in blood, and tortured by the pain of his wounds and the burning thirst it occasioned, he passed the night out of doors amongst the trees, during a furious tempest of rain, wind, and thunder. No one was at hand to lend him any aid. At day-break, crawling out into the plain, by God's mercy he espied a soldier who had fled from the massacre of the day before, and who carried him on his horse to the Spaniards at a very great distance, where he was completely healed. What, let me ask, was the occasion of so many deaths, and of so tragic an event? The unseasonable haste of a few soldiers in discharging their guns. The empty noise struck the air alone, and gave such courage to the Indians, that, laying aside fear, they rushed on more boldly, and denied the Spaniards the necessary time for loading their guns afresh. It was said, moreover, that many were destitute of gunpowder, and all certainly were so of courage, panic-struck at the sudden arrival of the savages, the burning of the houses, and the sight of so many deaths. The assaults of the savages must be repelled promptly but providently. Arms must be immediately resorted to, but something must always be reserved for the sudden chances of war: as the Indians, intent upon every opportunity of committing mischief, easily overcome the unarmed or those that

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514 Abipon 514

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manage arms unskilfully. Thus, if thirty artillery soldiers should undertake the defence of a station, they ought to be divided into three ranks, so that ten might fire their guns upon the enemy, ten load, and the others reserve an equal number loaded. By which means they would always have time to load their guns, and the Indians would never want cause for fear. By the careful observance of this method, thirty artillery soldiers might be found sufficient to rout and put to flight three hundred Americans. But if three hundred artillery-men were to fire all their guns at once, without killing any of the enemy, they, on the other hand, might be overcome by thirty savages. For the Abipones, like most of the Americans, are intimidated by the most trifling slaughter of their companions: if but one or two of them fall, the rest instantly take to flight, esteeming life far above the honour of victory. How comes it then that they are so dreaded by other nations? I will explain this in the next chapter.

1:Debrithoffer M-S (ca. 1760) 1822
514 Abipon 514

726 that the Indians are never more formidable than when they seem most afraid.

903 726 A very small number of Abipones are to be feared by the Spaniards, however numerous, if they be reduced to straits, surrounded on every side, and left no way of escape; for then they dare the utmost in their own defence. They convert every thing they lay their hands on into weapons. Terror inspires them with sagacity and courage, and consequently is more to be dreaded than the most magnanimous spirit. I have many instances of this in my mind, but it will be sufficient to relate three. An Abipon, with arrows, and, when these were consumed, with sticks, supplied him by his wife, did so much execution against the soldiers of St. Iago, by whom he was surrounded, that he maintained his post, and when, after many wounds inflicted and received, he fell at length, was highly extolled for his valour by the very Spaniards against whom he had fought. Nachiralarin, Chief of the Yaancaniga Abipones, spread the terror of his name throughout the colonies of Paraguay. Accompanied by a crowd of his followers, called *Los Sarcos*, or more properly *Garzas*, from their grey or blue eyes, Nachiralarin afflicted the country of Cordoba, Sta. Fé, Corrientes, and Paraguay, for many years, with slaughter and pillage, till he was at length taken

1:Dobrizhoffer M-S (ca. 1760) 1822
814 Abipon 814

and slain at the shores of the Tebiguary, by two hundred soldiers from Asumpcion. Shut up and besieged in a wood with fourteen Abipones, he fought with such obstinacy against the company of Spaniards, that he did not fall till after a contest of several hours. Some of his fellow-soldiers could not be prevented from escaping. It was never without disgust that I heard this victory boasted of by those present at the engagement; you would have thought they were speaking of the bloody battles of Thrasymene, Caudinæ Furculæ, Blenheim, &c. Certainly the leader Fulgentio de Yegros obtained great celebrity at that expedition, and was afterwards raised to the highest honours in the army, and to the government of the province itself. Add to these instances, that twenty wood-Abipones when attacked in the open plain by three hundred Christian Mocobios and Abiponian catechumens, chose to lose their lives before they would quit their station. Incredible is the obstinacy with which these few contended against numbers. The place which they had chosen at the beginning of the fight they every one occupied in death. From this it is evident, that a few, though inferior in number, arms, and strength, may prove formidable to a multitude, if, besieged by a surrounding company, and confined by the narrowness of the place, they

1:Dobrizhoffer M-S (ca. 1760) 1822
814 Abipon 814

have no room left them for escape. Sciplo judged wisely that a flying enemy should be allowed a passage. This precept is generally obeyed by the Paraguayrian Spaniards, who often yielded the savages more liberty of escape than need required. This Barreda found in an hundred expeditions which he headed against the Abipones and Mocobios. These savages display much prudence in the choice of the situation of their hordes. They generally choose a place which has a wood close behind, a lake, river, or marsh in front, and pasture for their horses on both sides. Barreda told me that whenever hordes so situated were to be attacked, he ordered his men to besiege them on the part towards the wood, that the savages might not, as usual, find their security there; but that the soldiers never obeyed his orders, well knowing that if they deprived the enemy of an opportunity of escape they should have a most dangerous conflict, and a very doubtful victory.

1;Debrizhoffer M-S (ca. 1760) 1822
SI4 Abipon SI4

be pierced they never despair of the man's life. 726
They are used to consider broken ribs and im- 752
mense gashes in the other members, as attended with little danger; they calmly look upon them without any expression of pain, and, half alive, reluctantly suffer themselves to be borne from the fight on other persons' arms. This I learnt, 703 ●
that these savages, unless flight be denied 726
them, seldom dare the worst. Terrified at the slaughter of a very few of their fellow-soldiers, they desert their leader, and escape how they can. There is no need to sound a retreat. Should ten or twenty take to flight, the rest, freed from all restraint of shame, trust their lives to their horses, and rush along with the impetuosity of a river that has burst its banks. On urgent occasions you will see two or three seated on one horse. At the beginning of an engagement on foot, they take care that the means of flight may not fail them: behind the backs of the combatants, and out of reach of the weapons, they station horses, upon which young men sit, and safely watch the vicissitudes of the fight.

But if the enemy, finding the fortune of war 726
against them, betake themselves to flight, they scarce have to fear a very obstinate pursuit from their adversaries, as the conquerors are very cautious not to forfeit their glory; they

1;Dobrizhoffer M-S (ca. 1750) 1822
514 Abipon 514

They who have received wounds in the battle deliver themselves to be sucked to a crowd of juggler physicians, a multitude of spectators admiring and extolling their constancy and fortitude. Great numbers flock to behold the spoils and trophies taken from the enemy. The women, giving way to an excess of gladness, seem mad with joy; they would make no end of singing, leaping, and applauding, were they not obliged to turn their attention towards making preparations for the public drinking-party of their husbands; who, at the same time that they wash the horrible colours from their faces, endeavour to clear from their minds, with wine, their past anxiety respecting the conflict. In the assembly of drinkers, where the victory is celebrated amidst confused clamours, and songs accompanied with the sound of gourds and drums; when all are heated with liberal draughts of mead, each begins to relate his own brave actions, and to laugh at the errors, cowardice, and flight of others; which not being endured by any of the Abipones, the warriors contend furiously amongst themselves, first with fists, and then, growing more enraged, with spears and arrows. Did not the women interpose to effect a reconciliation, and employ themselves in snatching away their weapons, and leading their husbands home, it is beyond A E E 4 doubt that more would be killed after the battle than in the battle.